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Letter dated 9 June 2011 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 9 June 2011, and its enclosure, from His Excellency Walid Al-Moualem, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Emigrants of the Syrian Arab Republic, addressed to H.E. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations (see annex).

I would appreciate it if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 9 June 2011 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Arabic]

Syrian Arab Republic

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Emigrants

I should like to convey to you and to States Members of the United Nations the position of the Syrian Arab Republic on the current violent events in my country, caused by extremist terrorist groups, and on the misinformation campaign that is being organized by well-known parties with a view to slandering Syria and undermining its regional and international position.

The President of the Syrian Arab Republic, His Excellency Dr. Bashar Al-Assad, has announced comprehensive reform programmes which the Government has begun to put into effect, with a view to strengthening the national process of building democracy, widening citizens' participation in the political process, firmly establishing national unity and ensuring general order and the security of the nation and the population.

Since mid-March 2011, through several legislative decrees and other measures, the political leadership has responded without delay to the demands of the demonstrators. Furthermore, specialized committees are currently studying the law. The President of the Republic has met popular delegations from the governorates in order to exchange views and understand their demands, and many genuine steps have been taken towards meeting those demands. In the forthcoming few days, a committee comprising high-level party representatives and other independent persons will conduct a comprehensive national dialogue in Syria, with the aim of expanding the decision-making base and strengthening national unity.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the demonstrations in most places and cases are no longer peaceful, as they were initially, but have become acts of violence, murder and destruction that reduce public and private installations to ashes. Stockpiles of arms and ammunition have been discovered in a number of places, which confirms that the problem we face has gone beyond the mere making of demands to an onslaught on the security, stability and sovereignty of the country that is being fomented from abroad.

It is a matter for the deepest regret that certain countries base their views and analyses of the situation in Syria on erroneous information, and take into account neither the reforms which have been decided upon nor the crimes and acts of destruction that are being perpetrated by armed gangs, which it is not possible for any State to ignore.

The resolutions against Syria for which certain members of international organizations are pushing constitute flagrant intervention in the internal affairs of Syria and an attempt to destabilize it and control the current and future decisions and destinies of its people, at the very time when Syria has declared its determination both to carry out reforms and to maintain absolute national independence and sovereignty, and has made clear its concern for the security of its citizens and the future of its people.

We hope that the United Nations and its Member States will assist Syria in confronting the challenges of extremism and terrorism and will not hastily adopt a position that will provide a cloak for the murderous, destructive gangs. We therefore affirm that it is important that the Security Council should not intervene in the internal affairs of Syria, which is a founding member of the United Nations. We are quite certain that any resolution that is adopted by that body under any heading will only exacerbate the situation and send a message to those extremists and terrorists to the effect that the deliberate destruction that they are wreaking has the support of the Security Council.

Syria will remain in communication with the United Nations Secretariat in order to convey details of the events that are taking place, and will keep it informed of the reforms that are being carried out by the Syrian authorities. Attached hereto is a list of the decrees, laws and decisions that have been issued by the Syrian leadership and that are being put into effect.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(*Signed*) Walid **Al-Moualem**
Minister for Foreign Affairs and Emigrants

Enclosure

I. Government decrees and resolutions

A. Presidential decrees

1. Decree No. 161 of 21 April 2011 ending the state of emergency.

2. Decree No. 133 of 2011 accepting the resignation of the Government of Mr. Mohammad Naji Ottri.

3. Decree No. 134 of 4 April 2011 asking Dr. Adel Safar to form a Government.

4. Decree No. 146 of 14 April 2011 providing that a Government should be formed under the leadership of Dr. Adel Safar.

5. Decree No. 120 of 23 March 2011 relieving Faisal Ahmed Kalthoum of his duties as Governor of Dar'a Governorate.

6. Decree No. 136 of 7 April 2011 relieving Mohammad Iyad Ghazal of his duties as Governor of Homs Governorate.

B. Legislative decrees

1. Legislative decree No. 49 of 8 April 2011 deciding to grant Syrian citizenship to some 200,000 registered foreign residents of Hasaka.

2. Legislative decree No. 53 of 21 April 2011 deciding to abolish the Supreme State Security Court.

3. Legislative decree No. 54 of 21 April 2011 deciding to regulate the right of citizens to peaceful demonstration as one of the basic human rights that is guaranteed by the Constitution of the Syrian Arab Republic.

4. Legislative decree No. 55 of 21 April 2011 deciding to entrust the judicial police or delegates with the responsibility for investigating crimes and hearing suspects.

5. Legislative decree No. 61 of 31 May 2011 deciding to grant an amnesty for crimes committed before 31 May 2011. The amnesty includes all persons belonging to political movements and halves penalties for felonies if there was no personal claim.

6. Republican decree of 2 June 2011 deciding to form a committee with responsibility for devising a basis for national dialogue and determining its operational mechanism and schedule. That body comprises Mr. Farouk Al-Shara'a, Vice-President of the Republic, President of the committee; Mr. Safwan Qudsi; Mr. Haytham Satayihi; Mr. Yasir Huriya; Mr. Hanin Nimr; Mr. Abdullah al-Khani; Mr. Walid Ekhlasi; Mr. Muneir al-Himsh and Mr. Ibrahim Daraji.

7. Legislative decree No. 40 of 2011 deciding to raise by some 33 per cent the wages and salaries of State employees.

8. Legislative decree No. 41 of 24 March 2011 deciding to increase the monthly pensions and benefits of military and civilian pensioners.

9. Legislative decree No. 42 of 24 March 2011 deciding to amend the tax on salaries and wages and raise the income tax threshold to 10,000 Syrian pounds.

10. Legislative decree No. 43 of 24 March 2011 deciding to amend the articles of Law No. 41 of 2004 concerning land in border areas.

11. Legislative decree No. 45 of 2011 deciding to establish a Syrian joint-stock company for health insurance, to be called the Cham Health Insurance Company. The company will have a legal personality and all the rights and powers necessary to carry out its work, and enjoy administrative and financial independence. It will undertake all work relating to individual and collective health insurance for all sectors of society.

12. Legislative decree No. 46 of 3 April 2011 deciding to give all civil and military State, public sector and popular organization retirees the option to be covered by health insurance. The general budget of the State will bear 62.5 per cent of the annual health insurance premium, while the remainder will be deducted from the pension of the retiree.

13. Legislative decree No. 47 of 3 April 2011 deciding to exempt farmers from fines for irrigation fees incurred between 1997 and 2000, provided they pay back irrigation fees within a year of the date of the issuance of the decree.

14. Legislative decree No. 48 of 4 April 2011 deciding to establish the Syrian Higher Institute of Islamic Law, Arabic language and Islamic Studies and Research, to be based in the city of Damascus and linked to the Minister of Awqaf. The Institute will be the first of the kind in Syria and will aim to prepare students who wish to complete their university and further studies and equip them with advanced skills in the field of their specialization within Islamic law, Islamic studies and Arabic.

C. Government decisions

1. Cabinet decision No. 6080 of 5 May 2011 deciding to form an anti-corruption committee.

2. Cabinet decision of 12 May 2011 deciding to form a committee with responsibility for drawing up a new draft law on general elections that is consistent with the optimum global standards. The committee must submit its work to the Prime Minister within two weeks.

3. Cabinet decision of 30 April 2011 putting forward a complete plan for desirable reforms, including political, security and judicial reform, economic and social policy reform and administrative reform to advance Government work.

4. Cabinet decision of 18 May 2011 establishing a judicial reform committee to lay out a comprehensive strategy for the reform of the judicial system at all levels.

5. Cabinet decision No. 6722 of 17 May 2011 establishing a committee with responsibility for laying comprehensive strategic foundations for the reform and modernization of public administration and putting forward relevant proposals.

6. As part of the process of administrative and institutional reform, at its session of 26 April 2011 the Cabinet discussed a draft law on the creation of an agency for the development of the civil service and Government employment, with the goal of

reorganizing and enhancing the performance of the civil service, improving the services it provides to citizens and training human resources.

7. On 9 May 2011, the first draft of a new draft law on local administration was presented for a 15-day period of public debate in order to enable observations, proposals and interpretations to be utilized in finalizing the draft before submission to the Cabinet.

II. Formation of investigative committees

1. On 31 March 2011, the Minister of Justice and Deputy President of the Supreme Judicial Council issued decision No. 905, forming a judicial committee to be headed by the Public Prosecutor of the Republic, with responsibility for launching immediate investigations into all the events that claimed the lives of a number of civilians and military personnel in Dar'a and Ladhiqiyah Governorates. That decision was subsequently amended by decision No. 1421 of 11 May 2011, whereby the committee was given responsibility for launching immediate investigations into all events in every governorate in which civilians and military personnel were killed or injured, and any other crimes arising from or connected to those events, and with processing related complaints. Decision 1421 regards the public defender, chief investigating judge and chief public prosecutor of each governorate as forming a subcommittee that performs the same tasks as and reports to the special judicial investigative committee. That committee will carry out its duties with professionalism, and has designated the following contact points for the submission of complaints:

Telephone: 11-3143250;
11-3112850;
Fax: 11-3119151;
Website: www.jpic.gov.sy.

2. On 19 March 2011, a committee was formed within the Ministry of the Interior in order to investigate the unfortunate incidents that occurred in Dar'a Governorate. Suitable measures will be taken and anyone the committee finds to have been responsible for or to have perpetrated any wrongdoing during those incidents will be held accountable.

3. On 21 March 2011, an official source announced that, as a result of the investigations carried out by the committee which was formed for the purpose of investigating the unfortunate incidents that occurred in Dar'a Governorate, youths whom the investigation had cleared of involvement in the incidents had been released. The source added that the committee would continue to seek out the real instigators and perpetrators.

III. Statements by the Ministry of the Interior

1. In a statement issued on 1 May 2011, the Ministry of the Interior announced that, in accordance with the dictates of the law and in order to preserve the lives of citizens and protect the security, stability and unity that the country's enemies were working to undermine by every means, it called on citizens who had been misled into participating in or committing acts punishable by law, including carrying

weapons, disrupting State security or issuing false statements, to turn themselves in and hand over their weapons to the relevant authorities, and to report any saboteurs, terrorists or arms caches. Those who did so between that date and 15 May 2011 would be exempt from punishment, legal repercussions and prosecution.

2. On 15 May 2011, a Ministry of the Interior official announced that, as of that date, a total of 6,131 persons implicated in subversive acts in the various governorates had turned themselves in. They had been released after pledging not to repeat any act that could harm the security of the homeland and citizens. The source said that many such persons continued to arrive at police stations and security offices in order to take advantage of the amnesty period set by the Ministry of the Interior for exemption from legal repercussions and prosecution for those who voluntarily surrendered to the authorities.

3. On 16 May 2011, in response to an increasing number of requests, and in the light of the continued arrival at security offices and police stations of persons implicated in subversive acts who wished to surrender in order to take advantage of the amnesty period granted by the Ministry of the Interior for exemption from legal repercussions and prosecution, the Ministry extended the amnesty period to 22 May 2011, in order to give more people the opportunity to take advantage of that amnesty period.

4. On 17 May 2011, the Ministry of the Interior announced that 8,881 persons implicated in subversive acts in the various governorates had voluntarily surrendered. They had been released after pledging not to repeat any act that could harm the security of the homeland and citizens.